

SABF Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code

1. Introduction

In accordance with the sporting ideals and precepts of the Olympic Charter, the South African Bridge Federation (SABF) expects its affiliated clubs and their members to respect the principles of ethics and good conduct. In view of these principles, the SABF Constitution prohibits political, religious, racial, gender or financial discrimination and any violation of human rights by its affiliated Clubs.

In order to guarantee as far as possible the above mentioned principles, the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code is intended to deal with any breach of the principles in question and any unacceptable or reprehensible conduct.

2. Unacceptable or Reprehensible Conduct

Examples of unacceptable and/or reprehensible conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Actions or behaviour unbecoming a person participating in a tournament
- b) Improper conduct, which includes but is not restricted to profanity, swearing, insulting or derogatory or demeaning remarks, significant shouting and/or screaming at any member of an SABF-affiliated club/Union/SABF event or directed towards any person working for the Club/ Union/ SABF either at the bridge table or on the premises of a bridge event.
- c) Improper conduct as in b) above towards any official of an SABF-affiliated Club/ Union/SABF in performance of their duties or functions
- d) Illicit actions or behaviour affecting the proper running of a competition, or unethical conduct or the results of it, including violation of the laws of duplicate bridge, cheating or betting
- e) Serious infringement of the SABF Constitution, by laws or regulations
- f) Serious prejudice against the SABF/Union/any of its affiliated clubs
- g) Failure to respect financial obligations towards the SABF/Union/Club
- h) Complete or partial failure without a valid reason to participate in a tournament already entered.
- i) Corrupt actions, threats , insults or accusations made to another player or players during the course of a tournament
- j) Knowingly making a false declaration to SABF/Union/affiliated Club officials

3. Procedure to be followed in case of reprehensible conduct

If the case arises, a Disciplinary Committee consisting of a minimum of three members should be appointed by the Club/ Union/SABF Committee to investigate the matter.

Prior to a Meeting of the Disciplinary Committee charged with examining a case of reprehensible conduct, the Secretary of the Club/Union/SABF should obtain details of the complaint in writing from the complainant. The individual accused of reprehensible conduct should receive a copy of the written complaint at least three (3) weeks prior to a Meeting of the Disciplinary Committee. The person accused should be informed in writing that he/she has the right to respond to the allegation(s) made, he/she may call relevant witnesses to corroborate any explanation or mitigating factors offered and he/she has the right to attend the Disciplinary Hearing and to be accompanied/represented by legal counsel or an advisor at the Hearing should he/she so wish. The Time, Date and Place of the Disciplinary Hearing should be provided to the person accused of reprehensible conduct and his/her written response (if any) should be received by the Secretary of the Club/Union/SABF at least one week prior to the Hearing to allow ample time for fair consideration of the case by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee should deliberate the matter and make a ruling by majority vote. The decision of the Disciplinary Committee should be communicated to the defendant and to the Club/Union/SABF within two weeks of the Hearing. In addition, the Disciplinary Committee should make known any sanction it has decided to impose.

Depending on the gravity of the case, sanctions can take the form of a Warning; the Banning of the individual from any or all bridge events at any or all SABF-affiliated Club(s) and/or any event run under the auspices of a Union and/or any event run under the auspices of the SABF for a specified period of time which may be indefinite. A Banning sentence may be suspended for a specified period of time if it is so recommended by the Disciplinary Committee

To appeal against the Disciplinary Committee's decision, a written request must be submitted to the Secretary of the Club/Union/SABFU within 20 days of notification of the aforementioned decision. This request must specify in detail the reasons for the appeal, indicate the desired redress and state whether an Appeal hearing is requested. The Club/Union/SABF reserves the right to charge a non-refundable deposit for this hearing should the Appeals Committee uphold the decision of the Disciplinary Committee.

The Appeals Committee shall be elected by the SABF committee and will consist of a minimum of three members who will take a decision by majority vote. No member of the original disciplinary committee shall be allowed to sit on the Appeals Committee.

The Appeal will be heard within the 90 day period subsequent to the request, on the basis of a written document accompanied by probative elements or on a basis of a preamble presented by the appealing party. The appealing party may be represented.

The decision of the Appeals committee, which is definitive and binding on the Club/Union/SABF and appealing party, is communicated to them both within two weeks subsequent to the hearing. The decision of the Appeals committee is final.

4. Immediate Intervention in cases of reprehensible action

If immediate intervention is necessary to deal with a reprehensible action (for example, in the case of prolonged, noisy behaviour or protests preventing the progress of a tournament, or violent or offensive behaviour) the person in charge is entitled to intervene immediately to restore order. In certain extreme cases the individual may be forced to leave the premises. Subsequently a report of the incident should be sent to the Secretary of the Club/Union/SABF whose Committee will appoint a Disciplinary Committee to investigate the matter.

5. Disagreement between an SABF member and an SABF-Affiliated Club

Disagreements can occur between a member of an affiliated Club and the Club Committee. In such cases, the Union may be requested to mediate and, if either party is not satisfied with the result of the mediation, the SABF member or the Club may appeal to the SABF on the matter. A subcommittee of the SABF Committee, appointed by the President of the SABF, will make a ruling that is binding on all parties involved.

6. Disagreements between Affiliated Clubs

Disagreements may occur between two or more affiliated clubs or between an affiliated club and the home Union or between an affiliated Club and the SABF. In such cases, the parties are obliged to consult a third neutral party which meets both parties and attempts to help them reach a mutually satisfactory solution.